

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2243
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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY KINSHASHA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3621

E.O.O . 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR UN PLO CG
SUBJ: GOI ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND PLO

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

DURING PRESS CONFERENCE APRIL 24, DEP FONMIN NASSAR ASSAR COMMENTED
ON RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS DEVELOPMENTS AND REITERATED GOI STAND ON
RELATIONS WITH PLO. THERE WAS NO TRANSCRIPT OF CONFERENCE. EMB
WILL POUCH FULL NEWSPAPER COVERAGE.

2. AID TO ZAIRE: ASSAR SAID IRAN WOULD PROVIDE AID TO ZAIRE
IF IT WERE REQUESTED. ASKED WHETHER SUCH ASSISTANCE HAD
BEEN SOUGHT, ASSAR REPLIED, "IT WILL BE ASKED FOR."

3. HUMAN RIGHTS: ASSAR ANNOUNCED VISIT OF INTERNATIONAL
RED CROSS TEAM WHICH ARRIVED IN TEHRAN APRIL 20. THEIR
FINDINGS REGARDING THEIR PRISON VISITS WOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED,
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BUT TEAM WOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IRANIAN GOVT. ON GENERAL
SUBJECT OF PRISON VISITS BY INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND FOREIGN
JOURNALISTS, ASSAR DENIED SUGGESTION THAT IRANIAN INVITATION
TO VISIT PRISONS WAS IN RESPONSE TO PRESSURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
ACTIVISTS. SOME FOREIGN JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO TOUR
IRANIAN PRISONS AND AHD AFTERWARD EITHER KEPT SILENT BECAUSE
THEY HAD FAILED TO FAULT THE GOI OR ELSE HAD INVENTED COMPLETELY

FICTITIOUS ACCOUNTS. ASSAR TOLD JOURNALISTS APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES WOULD CONSIDER THEIR REQUESTS TO VISIT IRANIAN PRISONS BUT THEY SHOULD NOTE THAT PRISONERS ALSO HAD CERTAIN RIGHTS AND COULD NOT BE TURNED INTO OBJECTS OF UNENDING CURIOSITY. (COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST MEDIA PUBLICITY GIVEN INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS VISIT SINCE BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT ON INSIDE PAGE OF FARSI PRESS APRIL 21 MENTIONED VISITORS' ARRIVAL. EMB UNDERSTAND TEAM COMPOSED OF 3 INDIVIDUALS BUT NEITHER NAMES OR NATIONALITIES YET KNOWN TO DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. PERHAPS GENEVA CAN CHECK ON THIS AND RESULTS OF MISSION.)

3. IRANIAN TIES TO PLO AND ISRAEL: ASSAR SAID IRANIAN RELATIONS WITH THE PLO HAD BEEN IN ABEYANCE SINCE PRIOR TO THE LEBANESE CRISIS WHEN PLO ASKED IRAN FOR PERMISSION TO OPEN AN INFORMATION CENTER IN TEHRAN. TEHRAN WAS CONSIDERING THIS REQUEST WHEN A PALESTINIAN GROUP PUBLISHED A PAMPHLET AND PUBLICLY PROMISED SUPPORT FOR IRANIAN TERRORISTS PLOTTING AGAINST GOVT. GOI DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION AND AN OFFICIAL CLARIFICATION OF PLO ATTITUDE TOWARD IRAN WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN FORTHCOMING. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON ISRAEL'S REPRESENTATION, ASSAR SAID ISRAEL DID NOT HAVE A LEGATION IN IRAN. WHAT WAS OFTEN ERRONEOUSLY CALLED A LEGATION WAS IN FACT A TRADE AGENCY WHOSE STAFF HAD NOT REPEAT NO DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES.

END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL.

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ASSAR'S CONFERENCE, PART OF INCREASING ROUTINE GOI PRESS CONTACT, TOOK WORKING LEVELS OF HIS OWN MINISTRY SOMEWHAT BY SURPRISE. NO TRANSCRIPT WAS MADE OF HIS REMARKS, AND AT LEAST IN CASE OF STATEMENT THAT RED CROSS REPORT WOULD NOT BE PUBLISHED, PRINTED VERSION OF EVENTS FOLLOWING DAY DIFFERED SOMEWHAT FROM ACTUAL CONFERENCE GIVE-AND-TAKE, ACCORDING TO REPORTER PRESENT. ASSAR ORIGINALLY SAID IT WAS NOT KNOWN WHETHER RED CROSS REPORT WOULD BE PUBLISHED, WHILE KEYHAN VERSION SAID IT WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT.

5. STATEMENTS ON PLO OFFICE REITERATED IRANIAN POSITION OF PAST YEAR, PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. ISRAELI EMBOFF TOLD US QUESTION ON ISRAELI MISSION UNDOUBTEDLY ASKED BY KEYHAN EDITOR TAHERI, WHO FREQUENTLY PICKS AT ISRAELIS. ISRAELIS SAID ASSAR REPLY WAS STANDARD IRANIAN ANSWER, BUT THEY NOT EXACTLY PLEASED QUESTION WAS RAISED AGAIN.

6. ZAIRE ASSISTANCE STATEMENT CAME AS COMPLETE SURPRISE TO REPORTERS. MFA WORKING LEVELS MYSTIFIED BY EXACTLY WHAT WAS

MEANT. BEST SPECULATION HERE IS THAT IRANIAN ASSISTANCE WILL
BE STRICTLY BUDGETARY.
MIKLOS

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